

SIGMA Assessment Systems

Building Leaders for Tomorrow



Using the LSP-R in Business Schools



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Using the LSP-R in Business Schools

Business degrees are currently the most popular undergraduate degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions in the United States. Not only that, as organizations expand their operations, the job and salary prospects for business majors continue to grow. Graduate programs are also increasing in popularity and accessibility, with MBAs currently holding the title of most popular online graduate degree. With a growing demand for business degrees, post-secondary institutions must continuously revise and improve their services to make sure they are catering to students' needs. Beyond a comprehensive curriculum, students are seeking quality career management, valuable networks, and opportunities for personal and professional development. Leadership assessments like SIGMA's Leadership Skills Profile – Revised ([LSP-R](#)) can help you not only meet, but exceed these expectations.

About the LSP-R

The [LSP-R](#) is a scientifically valid self-report personality assessment. It predicts the test-taker's potential on 50 leadership competencies related to cognitive, interpersonal, personal, and senior leadership skills. The LSP-R was developed using well-established leadership theories and decades of multi-source validation data. Below, we'll explore some of the ways in which the LSP-R can be applied in business schools.

Administering the LSP-R

The [LSP-R](#) is administered online and takes about 25 minutes to complete. Test-takers respond to a battery of questions that are used to generate an individual score on each of the 50 qualities included in SIGMA's [leadership competency framework](#). Once the test has been completed, a user-friendly report is made immediately available to the respondent. The report provides a detailed summary of each score, including definitions of every competency, feedback on the implications of test-taker's results, and guidance on how the competency can be developed and improved (click here to see a [sample report](#)). Using the online platform, the LSP-R can be administered in business schools in two ways:

- 1. Co-curricular Administration (i.e., outside of the classroom)** The LSP-R can be administered as a part of career management services or personal/professional development opportunities. The assessment can be made available to smaller groups through optional clubs and programs, or it can be administered to an entire cohort or school as part of an institution-wide extracurricular development session.
- 2. Curricular Administration (i.e., inside the classroom)** The LSP-R can also be administered through a particular course or curricular activity. Credits related to leadership, organizational management, and personal/professional development may be particularly well suited.

Why Use the LSP-R?

The LSP-R can be used for both [selection](#) (i.e., hiring, placement, promotion) and [development](#). This makes it an incredibly valuable tool for business schools, whose primary goal is to educate and equip the leaders of tomorrow. Using the LSP-R at business schools to support student development can benefit both the students and the institution. Students can increase their employability, identify strengths, and capitalize on development opportunities. Institutions, on the other hand, are better able to accomplish their mission, and can improve their standing among the global business school ranks.



The LSP-R Advantage

There are thousands of personality and leadership assessments out there. What makes the LSP-R any different? First, its development; the LSP-R was developed and revised with academic rigor, based on the latest science on leadership theory and personality measurement. Items were carefully chosen from a pool of over 4,700 personality items, drawing on content from three of SIGMA's seminal assessments: the Personality Research Form (PRF), Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (JPI-R), and Survey of Work Styles (SWS). This means you can trust the reliability and validity of your results. Second, the LSP-R is accompanied by a suite of development resources. Many of SIGMA's [succession planning](#), [coaching](#), and [training](#) programs are built upon the same competency framework assessed by the LSP-R and we have a variety of free [tools and templates](#), as well as a host of [development guides](#) that can be used to align your curriculum with leadership competencies or work towards developing individual skills.

Benefits for Students

One of the main benefits of leadership assessments like the LSP-R is that they can help test-takers increase their self-awareness. This holds many benefits for business school students who are looking to become corporate, not-for-profit, governmental, and other organizational decision makers. Self-awareness is particularly important in leaders because it allows them to understand what they bring to their role, make better choices, and be realistic in their expectations.¹ Self-aware leaders are reflective, observant, empathetic, perceptive, responsive, humble, self-controlled, discerning, and adaptable.²

Interestingly, studies have shown that experience and power (i.e., positional power) can hinder self-awareness. This is because expertise can prevent people from thinking critically, seeking evidence, and questioning their assumptions.³ In addition, power can limit one's ability to identify development opportunities, as subordinates may be unwilling or unable to provide candid feedback.⁴ In light of these findings, it is important that potential leaders seek out and are provided with opportunities to build an awareness of their strengths and their development opportunities early on. Business schools provide an ideal opportunity for this, reaching students at a critical point in their personal and professional development. For these students, taking the LSP-R and improving their self-awareness can increase employability, help them leverage their strengths, and provide space and time to capitalize on development opportunities.

Increase Employability

One of the primary reasons why people attend business school is to improve their employability. Students are looking to grow their network, earn a pay raise, increase career mobility, etc.⁵ The LSP-R can be used to support these goals because it allows academics to speak the language of the industry. This helps students prepare for success on-the-job, rather than in the classroom alone. Unlike other leadership assessments, the LSP-R was developed by top industrial-organizational psychologists, and takes both academic rigor and industrial applicability into account. It has been used with hundreds of clients across North America, ranging from small public organizations to large corporate bodies (including Fortune 500 companies, hospitals, universities, colleges, and government agencies). Using the LSP-R can help ensure that students are not only doing well in the specific environment of school but that they are prepared for the industries and roles they are about to enter.

Leverage Strengths

Part of increasing employability is helping students identify and play to their strengths. The LSP-R can be incredibly beneficial here as well. The LSP-R's Focus Report (click here to see a [sample](#)), breaks test takers' results into higher scores, lower scores, and the myZONE area for immediate improvement. Knowing the competencies where students naturally excel allows them to select careers where they can play to their strengths by looking for industries, organizations, and roles that will allow them to do what they do best. For example, students who excel in first impression, interpersonal relations, communication, and persuasiveness may be inclined to pursue a sales position, while students who have a strong analytical orientation, attention to detail, and thoroughness might be better suited for a role in accounting or finance.

In addition to setting and pursuing effective career goals, identifying strengths encourages students to look for ways they can use those strengths in their academic endeavors. Students who are self-aware and know what they do well can seek out tasks and activities that allow them to play to their strengths. For example, if a group is preparing to pitch a new venture to investors, a student who is strong in formal presentation and negotiation may offer to do most of the presentation and discussion, while another who is strong in technical orientation and productivity may offer to develop a prototype. These types of efforts are especially important given that studies show strengths-based work not only boosts individual self-confidence, it also

increases engagement, productivity, and performance.^{6, 7} Students who are more confident, motivated, and productive will in turn increase their chances of landing the job they want, and business schools and employers alike will benefit from these star-performers who excel at what they do because they're doing what they do best.

Capitalize on Development Opportunities

Apart from playing to their strengths, the LSP-R can help students better understand their development opportunities. This can be done using the [myZONE](#) feature of the LSP-R's Focus Report. The myZONE feature identifies competencies where it will be most efficient for individuals to focus their development efforts. These competencies are the ones where an individual has shown some skill but still has room for growth. Compared to competencies ranked at the bottom of an individual's LSP-R results, myZONE competencies are more likely to represent short-term development opportunities. With time and intentional development, these competencies are likely to become strengths, thereby increasing student's repertoire of leadership competencies. To aid in the process of developing competencies, the LSP-R's Focus Report includes an easy-to-use development guide. This can be used to support either self-directed or coaching-augmented leadership development. For more resources, take a look at SIGMA's Development Plan and Development Activities [templates](#).

Benefits for Schools

In addition to benefiting students, the LSP-R can be used at business schools to benefit the institution itself. First, scientifically developed, industry validated assessments like the LSP-R allow business schools to accomplish their mission. Second, they can help schools improve their global ranking along the way.

Accomplish Your Mission

One of the more intangible benefits of using the LSP-R at business schools is that it helps them accomplish their mission. Every business school has their own mission statement, for example, Harvard Business School's is "to educate leaders who make a difference in the world,"⁸ and HEC Paris'¹ vision statement is to "impact business and society through research, education, and action, to contribute to a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable world."⁹ Apart from official statements, a survey of some of America's most prestigious business schools (including Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, and Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill) found that students, employers, and deans believe that the purpose of business school is to:¹⁰

- Impart practical skills
- Prepare leaders
- Instill norms of ethical behavior
- Lead graduates to good corporate jobs

¹ HEC Paris is the abbreviated form of the full French name, *École des hautes études commerciales de Paris*

The LSP-R can directly help business schools achieve these goals. The strategic alignment between a school's vision and their training is incredibly important, as it provides a foundation from which all other previously mentioned benefits emerge. By teaching students how to assess skills, identify strengths, and invest in development opportunities, the LSP-R allows business school to impart practical skills to their students, particularly for executive positions which include coaching and strategic talent management. Furthermore, the LSP-R can help business school prepare leaders by identifying development opportunities and investing in these upfront. The assessment can also help instill norms of ethical behavior by demonstrating that competencies like integrity, sensitivity, and valuing diversity are not just peripheral, but critical leadership skills. Finally, the LSP-R can lead graduates to good corporate jobs by increasing students' employability through self-guided and school-supported development on essential leadership competencies. In this way the combined benefits of the LSP-R can help business schools accomplish their mission and work towards the vision they were created to achieve.

Improve Your Rank

Last but not least, the LSP-R can help business schools improve their rank. This incentive comes as a result of the aforementioned benefits, particularly those to business school students. Global MBA ranking methodology currently places employability among the top five criteria for distinction. According to this methodology, employability is measured using employment rate, as well as employers' selection of schools from which they would prefer to hire.¹¹ By using the LSP-R to help students increase their employability, identify strengths, and take advantage of development opportunities, business schools can therefore not only work to accomplish their mission, but also improve their global rank along the way.

SIGMA Can Help

Ready to start incorporating the LSP-R into your business school curriculum? Visit SIGMA's [website](#) to learn more about the LSP-R and how to order assessments for your course, cohort, or institution. You can also [contact us](#) directly for more information. We're always happy to speak with you!

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- ¹⁰ Bennis, W., & O'Toole, J. (May 2005). How Business Schools Lost Their Way. *HBR*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2005/05/how-business-schools-lost-their-way>.
- ¹¹ Staff Writer. (July 13, 2021). QS Global MBA Rankings – Methodology. *QS TOPMBA*. Retrieved from <https://www.topmba.com/mba-rankings/methodology>.